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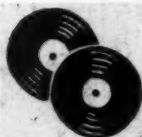
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# The American **RECORD GUIDE**



APRIL, 1953 - VOL. 19, No. 8.



Edited by

**Peter Hugh Reed**

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117 West 46th Street

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# The American RECORD GUIDE



APRIL 1953 • Vol. XIX, No. 8

formerly

The American Music Lover

## FOLK MUSIC OF THE U. S. A.

From the National Music Division

### FOLK MUSIC OF THE UNITED

STATES: *Songs of the Chippewa* (LP disc AAFS-L22); *Songs of the Sioux*; (LP disc AAFS-L23) *Songs of the Yuma, Yaqui, and Cocopa* (LP disc AAFS-L24); *Songs of the Pawnee and Songs of the Northern Ute* (LP disc AAFS-L25). Library of Congress, Music Division, Recording Laboratory, Washington 25, D. C. \$4.50 each.

▲THESE FOUR 12" LP discs issued by the Library of Congress make available to the student and the general listener part of the priceless collection of American Indian music known as the Smithsonian-Densmore Collection now in the National Archives in Washington. This collection consists of 3,591 old-type cylinders, most of them recorded in the field during the early years of this century by Dr. Frances Densmore, perhaps the greatest authority on the music of the North American Indian, working under the auspices of the Bureau of American Ethnology of the Smithsonian Institution. The entire collection has more recently been transferred to 16" acetate discs — a labor made possible by a munificent grant from Mrs. E. P. Reese — and it is from these discs that the songs on the four discs here under discussion were selected.

They by no means tell the whole story on the music of the American Indians, but there is an immense variety to be heard here. From the Chippewas there are thirty songs, recorded between 1907 and 1910; from the Sioux there are twenty-seven, recorded 1911-1914; from

the Yumas there are thirteen, from the Yaquis three, and from the Cocopas eleven, all recorded in 1922; from the Pawnees seventeen, recorded 1919-1920; and from the Northern Utes fourteen, recorded in 1914 and 1916 — one hundred and fifteen songs in all from seven different tribes.

These simple statistics show the potential purchaser of these records the two factors he will have to take into consideration when making up his mind whether or not to buy them: first, the tremendous amount of music inscribed on these discs — much of it nowadays to be heard nowhere else — which has been selected with real discrimination for its poetical or musical qualities from the still vaster store in the Library of Congress; and second, the fact that the recording as such, accomplished, as it was, thirty or forty years ago under field conditions with primitive recording equipment, is not — as it could not possibly be expected to be — up to today's standards.

Nevertheless, the transfer to LP's has been accomplished with immense skill, and only the other evening I sat through the eight LP sides with several Indian friends (none of them of the tribes in question) listening to this music with the greatest of pleasure. It all depends upon what you want the records for: inevitably the prospective purchaser must weigh the disadvantage of poor sound against the advantage of unduplicable performances of unique music. For students or fans of Indian music, the

records are an absolute "must." For those whose interest is more casual, or who are looking for a suitable introduction to that enchanting realm of poetry and sound which is the music of the North American Indians, the modern recordings issued under the *Tom-Tom*, *Ethnic Folkways*, and *Candelaria* labels are just as "authentic" and sound a great deal better.

The Library of Congress, incidentally, is packaging these records most attractively, and each record is accompanied by a really superb brochure of notes, translations, and commentary by Frances Densmore herself.

As a rider to this review, I should like to take the opportunity once again to urge on RCA Victor the feasibility of reissuing on LP their wonderful Laura Boulton album, long out of print, of *Indian Music of the Southwest*.

—William Henry Shultz

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## Folk Music Releases

### From Home and Abroad

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**Folk Music of the Mediterranean.** 2-12" LPs, P-501. **Music of the World's Peoples, Vol. 2.** 2-12" LPs, P-505. **Religious Music of India.** P-431. **American Tragic Ballads,** FP-64. \$5.95 each disc.

**Songs and Dances of Yugoslavia.** 10" LP FP-805. **English Folk Songs.** 10" LP FP-823. **Street Games and Songs.** 10" LP, FP-703. \$4.45 each.

▲THE ABOVE listing of recent releases from Folkways gives some indication of the diversity in approach of this forward-looking organization. The material is presented in several ways.

The first, as indicated in the *Music of the World's Peoples* series, is the dubbing onto LP of existing recordings now in private collections and long out of the public reach. One need only hear the exquisite Italian bagpipes or the fascinating Kashmir music from the second volume of this collection to realize

the wealth of material included in these discs.

An example of the intelligence of choice and juxtaposition is found in the discs devoted to Mediterranean music. From the dances of North Africa to the vital Basque music one feels that the true music of the peoples has been compressed and presented without endangering its vitality. Most of the credit for choice in this and prior discs goes to Henry Cowell, who also contributes the excellent notes.

Folkways also presents especially recorded programs, such as is offered on the disc devoted to India's religious music, recorded in India and made at the request of the National Council on Religion in Higher Education. This is fascinating music reflecting an aspect of Indian music rarely encountered. The disc comes fully annotated, with a reconstruction of the scores and excellent notes by Alain Danielou.

Laura Bolton — remembered for her African and American Indian collections for Victor — recorded the songs and dances of Yugoslavia. Even if one does find the music alarmingly sophisticated and commercial-sounding, one realizes that this documentary recording has captured what is, for better or worse, the true Yugoslav folk-flavor at present.

Folkways also presents studio recitals, as it were, of folk-material by professionals. Such is the collection of English folk-songs sung by Wallace House accompanying himself with a guitar. These 17 songs come from all over England. Mr. House's delivery is in style eclectic, to say the least, since he delivers them in their various dialects.

American tragic ballads are presented in the same "studio" manner by Andrew Summers, accompanying himself on a dulcimer in a disc subtitled *The Unquiet Grave*. Mr. Summers, a native Virginian, is almost perfect for the music — though a real, untutored ballad-singer caught at his fireplace and recorded would have been ideal.

No such objection can be applied to a wonderful disc called *1, 2, 3 and a Zing Zing Zing*, an on-the-spot capturing of

*The American Record Guide*

the street games and songs of the children of New York. This intensely interesting and strongly appealing disc was recorded and edited by Tony Schwartz on the streets and in the tenements of the city. Its candid portrayal of what is in essence a real and spontaneous art makes one wish this were a set of 12" discs rather than a single 10"

The quality of reproduction naturally varies. The dubbings, made with care, often do not show their age. The tape recordings have apparently been carefully prepared and are realistic in sound. The best of the above sets is the Indian music. The fidelity is excellent; the most subtle nuances being captured. —D.R.

## SONG RECITALS

**SCHLUSNUS SINGS, Vol. 3:** *An die Leyer; Lied eines Schiffers and die Dioskuren* (Schubert); *Von ewiger Liebe; Der Gang zum Liechen; Am Sonntag Morgen* (Brahms); *Nachtgang; Freundliche Vision* (Strauss); *Der Wachelschlag; Andenken* (Beethoven); *Feldeinsamkeit; Die Mainacht* (Brahms); *Fussreise; Auch kleine Dinge* (Wolf); *Heinrich Schlusnus* (baritone) with *Sebastian Peschko* (piano). Decca LP 9622, \$5.85.

**SCHLUSNUS SINGS' Vol. 4:** *Der Wanderer; Wohin; Der Musensohn* (Schubert); *Winterliebe; Traum durch die Daemmerung; Zueignung* (Strauss); *Wanderlied* (Schumann); *Aus der Jugendzeit* (Radecke); *Am Rhein* (Humperdinck); *Die Uhr; Tom der Reiner* (Loewe); *Heinrich Schlusnus* with *Sebastian Peschko, Otto Braun and Franz Rupp* (piano.) Decca LP 9623, \$5.85.

**A RECITAL OF 17th and 18th CENTURY MUSIC:** *Eile mich, Gott, zu erretten* (Schuetz); *Bist du bei mir* (Bach); *Warum betruerst du dich* (Bach); *Komm, suesser Tod* (Bach); *O del mio dolce ardor* (Gluck); *Se Florindo è fedele* (Scarlati); *Come raggio*

*del sol* (Caldara); *Danza, danza* (Duran-te); *Amarilli* (Caccini); *Suzanne Danco* (soprano) with *Jeanne Demessieux* (organ) and *Guido Agosti* (piano). London 10" LP LS-698, \$4.95.

**MOZART:** *Das Veilchen; Abendempfindung; Dans un bois solitaire; An Chloe;* **STRAUSS:** *Morgen; Staendchen; Traum durch die Daemmerung; Zueignung; Freundliche Vision;* *Suzanne Danco* with *Guido Agosti*. London 10" LP LS-699, \$4.95.

**HAHN:** *Chanson grises; Quand je fus pris au pavillon; L'Incredule; Paysage; Phyllis; Si mes vers avaient des ailes; Mai;* *Jacques Jansen* (baritone) with *Jacqueline Bonneau* (piano). London 10" LP LS-645, \$4.95.

**DEBUSSY:** *Trois Ballades de Francois Villon; Le Promenoir des Deux Amants; Fanloches;* **CHABRIER:** *Les Cigales; Ballade des gros didons; Villanelle des petits canards; L'Île heureuse;* **RAVEL:** *Chansons Madécasses;* *Jacques Jansen* with *Mlle. Bonneau* and (in the Ravel) *Maurice Gendron* (cello) and *Jean Pierre Rampal* (flute). London LP LL-644, \$5.95.

**STRAUSS:** *Hat gesagt — bleib's nicht dabei; Ach, Leib, ich muss nun scheiden; Heimkehr; Die Nacht; Schlagende Herzen; Schlechtes Wetter; Einerlei; Morgen;* *Anny Felbermayer* (soprano) with *Victor Graef* (piano); *Winterliebe; Ruhe, meine Seele; Waldseligkeit; Das Rosenband; Im Spaeltboot; Nichts; Traum durch die Daemmerung; Mein Herz ist stumm;* *Alfred Poell* (baritone) with *Victor Graef*. Vanguard LP 431, \$5.95.

**MUZIO SONG RECITAL:** *Se tu m'ami* (Pergolesi); *Spirale pur, spirale and O del mio amato ben* (Donaudy); *Umbra di nube and Ave Maria* (Refice); *La nina nanna della Vergine* (Reger); *Beau soir* (Debussy); *Bonjour Suzon* (Delibes); *C'est mon ami* (arr. Crist); *Les filles de Cadiz* (Delibes); *Claudio Muzio* (soprano) with *Orchestra* conducted by *Lorenzo Molajoli and Lincinio Refice*. Columbia LP ML-4634, \$5.45.

▲IT IS not always the quality of the voice that puts a singer across, so to speak, but the individuality of the singer's artistry. There are few cases where vocal shortcomings, especially faulty production, can be compensated for satisfactorily by cerebral persuasion since expression is the essence of song. Especially is this true from the recording, for the artist unseen must win his audience by the appeal of his interpretations. This asks for voice that is not unduly hampered by vocal deficiencies.

The art of Schlusnus was based on smooth and assured vocal production. This is the art of *bel canto* — perfection in line and phrase as well as expressive tone. There are others who make more of the poetic text than Schlusnus but they are often lacking in that unexcelled vocal confidence which never for a moment lets the listener down. To compare Schlusnus' singing of the Strauss songs with others is to realize the magic that lies in vocal purity. Space does not permit a detailed discussion of these recitals, so ingeniously arranged by Decca. As an admirer of the late baritone, I am deeply grateful to Decca for these and the other releases of the singer's artistry — an artistry, thanks to the phonograph — which can never die. The transfer to LP has been expertly handled. It is unfortunate that the texts are omitted here.

Miss Danco is an artist of stylistic refinement. While she has beauty of voice and generally an unexcelled vocal purity, she often allows her intelligence to usurp her emotions. This is true in the tender *Bist du bei mir* of Bach and others in her 17th-century group, yet there is beauty in her singing which is reward within itself. In concert, Miss Danco has always been most rewarding in her *arie antiche* groups and her beautifully poised singing of *Amarilli* inevitably has to be repeated. In this group, the singer's artistry has much of the subtlety of the painter of miniatures.

While Miss Danco substantiates the charm of the Mozart songs, she does not make the most of their characterization. Her Strauss group reveals her musical intelligence though not always a true

emotional response to the poetry. *Zueignung* is not a song for her type of voice, yet it proves no intruder in the scheme of things which begins with the poised beauty of *Morgen* and ends with the restrained tenderness of *Freundliche Vision*. Such cultural artistry as we encounter here can disarm the most captious critic.

Mr. Jansen, who made a favorable impression as Pelléas in the wartime recording of RCA Victor's release of Debussy's opera, seems to have suffered a vocal setback. His singing in both record recitals is not without effort and his tonal quality is throaty as well as explosive on the high end. His interpretations do not sustain interest and the monotony of his style retards the listener's enjoyment. More's the pity because both programs are attractive. The piano seems to have been placed in the background in these recitals, but not for a good reason.

The two Strauss recitals by Miss Fehrmayer and Mr. Poell are excellently recorded with fine balance between the singers and the pianist. The soprano has a light lyric voice, reminiscent of Elisabeth Schumann though perhaps more fragile on occasion. Her artistry is most persuasive and one could hardly fail to wish a repetition of her well-chosen program. Mr. Poell gives one of the finest recitals that he has made to date for the phonograph. Indeed, one feels that he has a particular rapport with Strauss lieder. His voice is rich and full and his interpretations are among the best of recorded Strauss. Both artists have wisely chosen unfamiliar as well as familiar songs.

The recital of songs by the late Claudio Muzio was originally a 78 rpm set, issued in the middle '40s by Columbia. Its transfer to LP is completely satisfactory. The beauty of Muzio's voice retards criticism of her artistry, or the fact that orchestral backgrounds were employed where the piano would have served best. When a singer like Muzio is heard in familiar songs, one does not at the moment recall others but enjoys the beauty of the voice heard at the time. Her program is a most attractive one and cannot fail to appeal to admirers of song recitals. —P.H.R.

*The American Record Guide*



# THE SINGERS' TOLL

FOR THE YEAR OF 1952

By Leo Riemans

## Part II

**T**URNING to the male singers, the list of those who passed away is even longer than the female ones. **Heinrich Schlusnus** was the almost perfect male counterpart of Elisabeth Schumann. He too was born in 1888 and had a long career, with an ideal artistic Indian summer after the war. Both he and Schumann made records until within a year of their death. Both were operatic singers who also specialized in the interpretation of lieder. There is a marked affinity between them in their interpretative and communicative qualities in lieder singing. It is a pity that they never recorded together, something which could have been easily arranged in the acoustic Polydor era. Schlusnus was a lifelong Polydor artist, even though his records appeared under various labels — Brunswick, Decca, Siemens, Deutsche Grammophon and London. He began his recording career, which extended right up to his death, in 1918. I thought it unwise of him to re-record so many of his lieder in his last years, as the technical gain did not outweigh the facts that his voice was lacking in the earlier tonal freshness and that his interpretations were less spontaneous. Those who own the early electric recordings of this sterling artist will not wish to part with them, even though they buy his middle and later period ones now on LP.

Like Elisabeth Schumann, Schlusnus was an ideal interpreter of Strauss' lieder. In the acoustic era, he actually made six songs with Richard Strauss accompanying him. Like Schumann, Schlusnus also concentrated on beauty of tone and

smooth delivery, sometimes sacrificing dramatic expression for these qualities. He was at his best in purely lyrical songs and arias, and as such an artist he was a true "master singer" in the Germany where such vocal perfection was too often ignored in favor of excessive temperament and dramatic explosiveness. In a period when so-called "vocal-acting" was the great ideal, Schlusnus staunchly upheld the tradition of pure *bel canto*.

**Aureliano Pertile**, who died this past year at sixty-eight, was regarded in Italy as one of the greatest tenors of his generation, and in my opinion rightly so. In 1921-22, he appeared at the Metropolitan where everything conspired against him. He had to make his debut in *Tosca* on the same night that Maria Jeritza made hers. The lady, with her dramatic exaggerations and theatrical tricks, eclipsed him completely, despite the fact that he sang well. After this Gatti-Casazza, who from time to time had strange ideas in the assignment of roles, cast Pertile as Julien in *Louise*, a part for which he was ill-fitted as he hardly knew a word of French. Moreover, he did not look the part and was therefore thoroughly unsuited his assignment. Another misfit was Dimitri in *Boris*. Thus Pertile was blamed for the director's misjudgments and America, as a result, lost one of the most intelligent and musical of all tenors of his time, as Toscanini once said. His voice may have lacked the clarion ring of Lauri-Volpi's top tones, or the velvety beauty of Gigli's, but it possessed a dramatic intensity which was lacking in both his rivals. Perhaps his greatest part was as Nerone, not only Boito's

which he created, but also Mascagni's, which I preferred. (I have never been able to understand why Mascagni's *Nerone* has been so unanimously neglected, unless there exists no other tenor able to sing it as Pertile did.) Pertile was a fine actor, something no one could claim for either Gigli or Lauri-Volpi. He was also a greater musician, whose phrasing was ever perfect (listen to his perfect staccati in *Di quella pira* and compare it to that of any other tenor). When he resorted to a sob, one could be certain that it was at an appropriate moment — a manifestation of required emotion and not just a theatrical trick like Lauri-Volpi's and Gigli's, who often overdid the grunts and sobs. Pertile's Manrico in the complete *Trovatore*, his Don José and Rhadames in the complete recordings of *Carmen* and *Aida* (H. M. V. and Victor) will continue to live as splendid interpretations of these roles, not likely to be rivalled in this day and age. Though his acoustic Pathé's and Columbia's were excellent, his best recordings are his early electric H. M. V.'s. To name one, characteristic



Aureliano Pertile

of his dramatic powers, hear *Guardate pazzo son* from Puccini's *Manon Lescaut*, which has never failed to thrill me (incidentally the anonymous *Captain* at the end is none other than Granforte). His long list of recordings in the La Voce del Padrona catalogue testified to his prestige in his native Italy.

Another tenor, who should have been more famous than he was, **Antonio Cortis** died in April 1952 in his native Valencia. Like Pertile, he was a fine musician. He originally studied composition and conducting. In his last years, he conducted many symphonic concerts in Valencia and Barcelona, performing some of his own orchestral works. On Victor records, he also sang some of his own songs. Offhand, I can only think of Tauber and Schipa who did this. Cortis was for many years at the Chicago Opera, where he occupied a niche similar to Lauri-Volpi's at the Metropolitan, though he was the more finished artist. He made comparatively few recordings for Victor, of which only one — two arias from Giordano's *La Cena della Beffe* — is famous, and justly so. The Italian La Voce del Padrona catalogue lists quite a number of recordings from his most famous roles — the Duke in *Rigoletto*, Puccini's *La Bohème*, *Turandot* and *Tosca*. There is also a record of *Di quella pira* and *Ah, si ben mio* from *Trovatore*.

**Riccardo Martin** (born Hugh Whitfield Martin), who sang at the Metropolitan from 1907 to 1915 and later with the Chicago and Boston opera companies, died this past year. He was 73. He recorded around 1910 for Victor and also for Edison Amberola cylinders. Martin might have been "a composer of operas rather than a singer of them," says Oscar Thompson in his book *The American Singer*, for he first studied composition with Edward MacDowell at Columbia University and also took violin lessons. He first studied singing with Esclais and Sbriglia in Paris, and later with Lombardi in Italy. His production was more French than Italian and lacking in tonal flexibility. His voice did not record well in the acoustic era and its sound from the records has been called "a curious blend

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of a silver trumpet and a cold in the head." Since this seems to me no exaggeration, I shall not endeavor to describe the sound in myself. It is a fascinating vocal quality, which one either likes or dislikes. I happen to like it very much.

**Emilio Venturini** is well known to collectors for his work in small parts in several complete operas. For years, he was the foremost second tenor at the Chicago Opera. He created one of the three Ministers in the world premiere of *Turandot*. He passed away in 1952, as also did **Max Altglass**, who sang small parts at the Metropolitan from 1924 to 1940. Before he came to the Metropolitan, Altglass was heard in big roles in Germany and left some acoustic Odeon recordings. He was in demand in later years as a coach, and it is not generally known that **Maria Mueller** studied with him for several years.

**Enzo De Muro Lomanto** is a still undervalued artist. He was a pupil of De Lucia, and I hear De Lucia's vocal style in everything that Lomanto did. He was the husband of Toti Dal Monte. They never recorded together, as they separated some 20 years ago. De Muro Lomanto was a Columbia artist in Italy. He recorded the complete *Lucia* with Caprar and made many separate solo recordings. I strongly recommend his *E lucecan e stelle*, which is one of the most sensitive renditions of an aria which has become all too hackneyed. Most tenors sing it in an unrelieved *forte*, but Lomanto starts it in an improvising manner and then sings its opening phrase, *O dolce bacci*, in a lovely *mezza-voce*, gradually building up his climax. Another wonderful recording of his is the duet from *La Sonnambula*, sung with that exquisite soprano **Maria Gentile**. This record sounds as though it had been sung in the G & T days instead of the electric era. Lomanto was 51 when he died.

My last tenor is the American **Donald Dame**, who was only 34 when he died. It is a pity that in this advanced age of recording a fine artist can pass away without leaving any truly representative records of his art behind him. Dame made his debut in 1943 as *Larète* in *Mignon*.

April, 1953



Antonio Cortis

on the same night as **Patrice Munsel**. Though **Olin Downes** devoted more space to Munsel, he had this to say about Dame — "he should be a very useful member of the organization which now employs him," something Downes did not say about Munsel. Unfortunately, he does not seem to have been given any important roles at the Metropolitan, so he went into radio where he created a large following for his singing in the *Album of American Music*. This did not satisfy him, so after the termination of his contract he set out for Europe, vowing to spend all his earnings in singing the music he wanted to sing. In Europe, he was received with favor as a recitalist of personality, character and charm. I had the pleasure of hearing him twice and of spending several hours in his company. As an example of his artistic programming, though "introduction" concerts anywhere usually cost the artist some \$300 upwards, he engaged a string quartet from the Concertgebouw Orchestra in Holland to sing **Vaughan Williams'** song cycle, *On Wenlock Edge*, in which his artistry recalled that of the late **Gervase Elwes**. Of all the singers I have heard in recital since the war, **Donald Dame** made one

of the deepest impressions on me, despite vocal limitations. He was selected to sing in the Dutch Parliament Hall on Liberation Day 1950, and I shall not forget the way he sang Handel's *Comfort Ye my People*. In his last days, he was touring in an English production of *Fledermaus*. His Victor records date from his radio days — sentimental songs, which are dressed-up with lush Hollywood show-orchestra accompaniments.

Donald Dame in some ways recalled McCormack in his ability to put across a song. It is significant that after I commemorated him on the radio, playing Bartlett's *A Dream*, I received a letter from Julia Culp, who said she regarded him as one of the greatest lieder-singers since Paul Reimers and Gervase Elwes.

1 **Giacomo Rimini**, the husband of Rosa Raisa, also died in 1952 in his early 'sixties. His complete *Falstaff* on Columbia is well known, but I think his electric Brunswicks were his best recordings. His Pathé ones are difficult to play, and his Vocalions are badly reproduced. I regard his best record as the Serenade from *The Jewels of the Madonna* on Brunswick; it is coupled with the *Brindisi* from *Hamlet*. His Figaro (Rossini) was excellent. Of the duets he made with his wife, the *Travatore* and *Cavalleria* (both ample and complete) are the best.

21 An old-timer, who died in the Verdi House at Milan, is the basso **Oreste Luppi**, one of the original Fonotipia artists of 1904. He was eighty-two last year. Luppi possessed a fine bass voice and in his time enjoyed considerable prestige in Italy. His long list of imposing operatic selections in the early Fonotipia catalogue include solos from all the best known operas as well as duets with artists like Bonci, Sammarco, Magini-Coletti, Giannina Russ, and Escalais.

Perhaps it would be of interest to readers to know that among the artists now living in the Verdi Casa are the old Fontipia prima donnas Maria Giudice and Esperanza Clasenti, the old Zonophone soprano Fernanda Rapisardi (who must be well into her eighties), the tenor Alessandro Ravazzolo, and among younger

recruits the baritone Enrico Molinari (Columbia), and the Metropolitan veteran Alfio Tedesco, who in Europe chose to call himself Alfredo Tedeschi.

Some further artists who died in 1952 include the *comprimario* tenor **Octave Dua**, who for many years sang with the Chicago Opera (not many records to his name), the baritone **Giovanni Polese**, who made Edison cylinders, and the French bass-baritone **Jean Aquistapace**, who was best known in France but also sang at Covent Garden. He recorded for Pathé. Also the tenor **Ibos**, who created the role of Werther in Paris, whose only record was a private cylinder now issued by the French Association Discophiles. Lastly, there was the Italian basso **Luciano Neroni**, who was still young, and whose fine Cetra records date from after the war.

Some artists who passed away in 1951, too late to be included in my article last year, were the English tenor **Walter Hyde**, the Australian soprano **Amy Castles**, the German baritone **Georg Hann** (best remembered for his wonderful Caspar in the Deutsche Grammophon set of *Freischuetz*), the Italian tenor **Nino Ederle** (who sang much for Supervia, and who had a wooden hand and arm), the Costa Rican tenor **Manuel Salazar** (who was at the Metropolitan for a short time), the German buffa-tenor **Hermann Schramm** (one of the finest of all Mime's), and the French basso **Leon Rother**, who needs no description in an American periodical. Rother left some valued Columbia recordings, made in the acoustic era. Only a year or two before he died he gave a New York recital and was cordially received and praised for his fine singing. [Prior to his recital, Rother gave a short program at The Bohemians, the oldest music club in New York, where 250 musicians present applauded him vociferously. His voice was well preserved and his artistry still commanding. It is said that De Luca urged his emergence from retirement. — Editor.]

Finally, I must signal the death, "some years ago," of **Cesare Formichi**, an

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other veteran of Columbia records who sang with great success in the Chicago Opera. His recording career lasted from 1910 to well into the 1930s. It is most surprising that his death went unnoticed in the newspapers, the musical magazines, and the whole world in general. Such is fame!

## Bach's "Clavier Uebung"

**BACH:** *Clavier Uebung* (complete); Ralph Kirkpatrick (harpsichord) and Paul Callaway (organ). Haydn Society set HSL-A, seven discs, \$41.65; or HSL 3056 through 3062, available separately, \$5.95 each.

▲THE HAYDN SOCIETY has performed a noble service by this publication of the entire *Clavier Uebung*. Apart from on exception to an editing foible or occasional umbrage on a point of interpretation, there is no gainsaying the enterprise of all parties concerned and the overriding musical integrity pervading the whole. Nor can there be any reasonable objection to the recording job. While the reproductive range is not as extended as it might be it goes far enough to insure luminous sounds throughout this mammoth recital. For the information of those who may not be votaries, *Clavier Uebung* is a name given by Bach himself to his four published collections of keyboard music. The title seems to have been an afterthought. Similarly there was no *a priori* design for the project. It took shape as the years went by. The *Partitas* appeared one by one, for instance, starting in 1726. Not until 1731 were they known as the *Clavier Uebung*, and the cognomen came to include most of the composer's published keyboard works ending with the *Goldberg Variations* as late as 1742.

The *Clavier Uebung* contains the six *Partitas*, the *Overture in the French Manner*, the *Four Duets*, the *Concerto in the*

*Italian Style*, the *Chorale Preludes* (which is to say the *E-flat Praeludium*, settings of the *Kyrie* and the *Gloria* of the Lutheran mass and also of the *Credo*, *Lord's Prayer*, *Baptism*, *Penitence*, and *Communion*, followed by the *Triple Fugue*) and finally the *Goldberg Variations*. It has been seen fit in the present edition to transplant the *Four Duets* from their place just before the *Triple Fugue* to an arbitrarily new location between the *French Overture*, and the *Italian Concerto*, so that they are played on the harpsichord rather than the organ. Mr. Kirkpatrick foresaw objections to this and apparently came to regret the decision himself. He says, "It occurs to me that we may have been very much mistaken." One is inclined to agree but there is room for argument. The consensus, which the sponsors of this recording did not accept, holds that the *Duets* were intended as offertories between the final Communion Hymn and the closing voluntary. By this placement they would be sensibly in context, and not at all superfluous as Mr. Kirkpatrick seems to have believed in the planning stages of this undertaking. The performances here are every one straight and studied. Mr. Kirkpatrick, who used a harpsichord made in Boston under the direction of Arnold Dolmetsch in 1908, plays the *Italian Concerto* more forthrightly than Schnabel in the familiar old piano recording. In the *Partitas*, Mr. Kirkpatrick's poetically metronomic way is more effective than the arresting but freely treated Badura-Skoda piano version.

His *Goldberg Variations*, too, I prefer to the rather fussy second interpretation (Victor LM-1080) of Mme. Landowska. In this performance, especially, the present soloist achieves a miracle of communicative classicism. And this is also the most successful recording of the lot, although an Altec microphone in fixed position was employed for all of the harpsichord sections. The two organ discs are more subdued and generally less well defined than the others, but again there is a satisfactory consistency of sound which belies the intelligence that a sawed-off Altec mike was pulleyed

up and down to cope with the acoustics in the Washington Cathedral. Mr. Callaway, like Mr. Kirkpatrick, plays with an almost ascetic straightforwardness and tends to eschew "interpretation" as such in keeping with the Bach postscript that all of the *Clavier Uebung* is intended "for the spiritual enjoyment of music lovers." To my taste Mr. Callaway does not penetrate as deeply as did Fritz Heitmann in his notable recording of the *German Organ Mass*. But the engineers certainly do better by Mr. Callaway. Withal this is a splendid and welcome and patently definitive addition to the basic Bach discography.

— James Lyons

## EARLY MOZART

**MOZART:** *Concertos No. 3 in D, K.40 and No. 4 in G, K.41*; Artur Balsam (piano) and Otto Ackermann conducting the Winterthur Sym. Orch. Concert Hall LP 1163, \$5.95.

**MOZART:** *Three Concertos, K. 107* (after J. C. Bach); Same artists. Concert LP 1164, \$5.95.

**MOZART:** *Symphony No. 1 in E flat, K. 16; Symphony No. 2 in B flat, K. 17; Symphony No. 5 in B flat, K. 22; Symphony No. 6 in F, K. 43*; Otto Ackermann conducting the Winterthur Sym. Orch. Concert Hall LP 1165, \$5.95.

**MOZART:** *Symphony No. 4 in D, K. 19; Symphony No. 10 in G, K. 74;*

*Symphony No. 11 in D, K. 84; Symphony No. 14 in A, K. 114*; Same artists. Concert Hall LP 1166, \$5.95.

▲THAT MOZART was a *wunderkind*, mercilessly exploited by his father, we are all aware. That he was a great keyboard player and one of the greatest virtuosi, in the best connotation of that word, there can be no doubt. In his fifth year, he began to compose small keyboard pieces. In his sixth year, he played in public with his sister. He even performed a concerto in Vienna by Wagenseil at this time. It is not surprising that his first three symphonies came in his eighth and ninth years and that by his tenth year he had the urge to fashion a few concertos for his own particular use. That he took three clavier sonatas by Johann Christian Bach (*K. 107*) and made them into concertos was a tribute to the elder man, whose *galant* style had caught the fancy of the public. Later, in his twelfth year, he devised four more concertos from sonata movements by other contemporaries (*K.37 through 41*).

The question the reader asks at this point is probably the one I asked when I first got recordings of some of these works — "are they really worthy of consideration?" While definitely overshadowed by the original concertos from *K. 271* onward, these early works are not just historical curiosities. They have a sort of youthful magic all their own, which only their composer could have bestowed upon the material he used. They are objective, full of sparkle and rhythmic

**THE AMERICAN RECORD GUIDE**, published at Pelham 65, N.Y. Editorial Office: 115 Reed Ave. Business Office: Room 11, Post Office Bldg.

●Peter Hugh Reed, Editor; Sidney Kleinman, C. J. Luten, James Norwood, Associates; Philip L. Miller, Harold C. Schonberg, Donald Richie, Max de Schauensee, Contributors. Paul Girard, Advertising and Circulation. Julius J. Spector, Art Editor.

●Published on the tenth of each month. **The American Record Guide**, sells at 35c a copy. Annual subscription in the U.S.A. and Canada, \$3.50. In all foreign countries, \$4.00.

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●Reentered as 2nd class matter Nov. 7, 1944 at the Post Office at New York, N.Y. under the act of March 3, 1879. Additional re-entry at Post Office, Easton, Pa., June, 1950. (Contents copyright 1953 by Peter Hugh Reed.)

life. Balsam, who previously performed K. 37 and K.39 (Concert Hall LP 1119), plays these works with evident enjoyment, keeping them bright and always rhythmically alert. Einstein tells us that Mozart played these works, "not just in his childhood days but in later years," pointing out that the cadenzas in the *D major*, K. 107 definitely belong to a later period. Of course, these concertos were written for the harpsichord originally, but it is quite possible that Mozart performed them later on the piano. By his thirteenth year, he declared his preference for the early pianoforte. The recording of these works is brightly realistic in tonal quality, a definite advance over the earlier release of K. 37 and 39.

It is not surprising that one of the most inspired of all composers in his early concertos and early symphonies lacked the ability of the time to make his music more adventurous listening. His first truly "adventurous" symphony is his early *G minor*, K. 183, written in his seventeenth year. That he moved along conventional lines in the beginning is understandable; his imagination though awakened was not yet developed. The influences of J. C. Bach and Carl Abel prevail, and both of these men performed these early works in recognition of a young composer's talent. The youthful animation and assurance of the early symphonies, with their often *buffo* characteristics, have a healthy aura which, if it does not quicken one's perceptions, holds one's attention. The prevailing style is that of the Italian *sinfonia* though a minuet is introduced in several. The scoring is generally conventional showing that these works were intended mainly as music of practical use (*Gebrauchsmusik*), though No. 6, K. 43 written in Mozart's eleventh year shows more imaginative handling of the instruments as well as a maturing of temperament, as the annotator — James Lyons — rightfully points out. The finale of No. 5, K. 22 has an interest in that the composer reused this material adroitly in his *Nozze di Figaro* years later. Ackermann's performances of these works, in matters of rhythm and tonal expressiveness are

praiseworthy. The recording is live and true.

**MOZART:** *Symphony No. 26 in E flat*, K. 184; *Symphony No. 32 in G*, K. 318; Fritz Lehmann conducting the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra. Decca 10" LP DL-4045, \$2.50.

▲THESE EARLY symphonies, written in Mozart's seventeenth and twenty-third years, are definitely in the style of the opera *sinfonias* or overtures of the period. The first, following the early *G minor Symphony*, K. 183, is almost as masterful as its predecessor. K. 318 is a gem of its kind. Einstein says there is no doubt it was intended as the overture to the *Singspiel Zaide*, and outlines its relationship to that unfinished opus. Both of these works were intended for large orchestra and are well served in these recordings. The performances are excellent and the recording most satisfactory.

—P.H.R.

## OPERA SPOTLIGHT

**BELLINI:** *La Sonnambula* (Opera in 2 Acts); Lina Pagliughi (Amina), Ferruccio Tagliavini (Elvino), Cesare Siepi (Rodolfo), Annamaria Anelli (Teresa), Wanda Ruggeri (Lisa), Piero Poldi (Alessio), Armando Benzi (A Notary), Cetra Chorus and Orchestra of Radio Italiana, Turin, conducted by Franco Capuana. Cetra Soria LP set 1240, 3 discs, \$18.85.

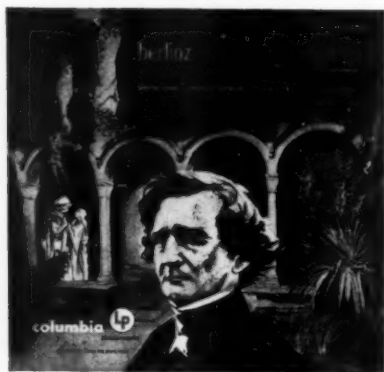
▲*La Sonnambula*, one of the most popular operas of its day, is also one of the outstanding examples of the early 19th-century romantic school. Though its naive libretto today seems quaintly dated, there is nothing dated about its elegant, elegaic melodies.

This is to say that *Sonnambula* relies almost entirely for its success on the ability of its cast to sing beautifully. It is a matter for rejoicing that Lina Pagliughi, Ferruccio Tagliavini, and Cesare Siepi can so effectively vindicate the almost lost art of *bel canto* in this recorded performance.

Mme. Pagliughi's singing of Bellini's wistful arias was never more lovely. Her tones are often of melting sweetness and incredibly limpid. The exquisite aria, *Ah, non credea mirarti* is a treasure-able vocal experience.

Tagliavini seems just right for Elvino. His *Prendi l'anel ti dono* becomes a model of *bel-canto* style, and in the duets with the soprano his notes blend most melodiously. When he tries for more volume than is rightly his, his voice becomes hard, but these moments are the exception. Siepi is an admirable Rodolfo — dignified, restrained, discreet in the use of his fine, youthful voice.

Franco Capuana's authoritative conducting observes the score as originally written by Bellini, without the various deviations and embellishments that were added later. The surfaces of this particular copy were marred by many irritating clicks that seemed to occur in the most undesirable places; but even these could not ultimately disturb one's very real enthusiasm. —M. de S.



## JUST RELEASED!

The first and only complete orchestral score of Berlioz' dramatic symphony. Dimitri Mitropoulos conducts the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York. Exclusively on Columbia "Lp."

**VERDI:** *Il Ballo in Maschera* (complete opera); Beniamino Gigli (Riccardo), Gino Bechi (Renato), Maria Caniglia (Amelia), Fedora Barbieri (Ulrica), Elda Ribetti (Oscar), Tancredi Pasero (Samuele), Ugo Novelli (Tommaso), N. Niccolini (Silvano), Blando Giusti (Il Giudice), Chorus and Opera of the Royal Opera House, Rome, conducted by Tullio Serafin. RCA-Victor LP set LCT-6007, 2 discs, \$15.44 (also 45-rpm set WCT-6007, 9 discs).

▲CONSIDERING Gigli's popularity and the sale of Victor's several sets in which he is featured — *Boheme*, *Pagliacci*, *Aida*, *Mme. Butterfly* and *Tosca* — it is surprising that this set was not released long years ago. It was issued during the war in Italy and made available on import here in 1947. Though the set is ten years old, its reproduction is full and sonorous and realistic in every way. In December 1947, I found occasion to write about the Italian recording which I had just received. The performance rather disappointed me on first hearing but subsequently I have found it as enjoyable as any performance of this opera heard in the theatre in recent years. Gigli is in top form, particularly praiseworthy in his artistic restraint. Bechi, whose recent Figaro is blatantly sung, was vocally at his finest when this performance was recorded. Barbieri with her sizeable voice imparts a histrionic quality to her impersonation of Ulrica. Ribetta as Oscar has an edgy quality which is not pleasant. Caniglia, a seasoned artist, is uneven, often singing off pitch, but in her best moments she is impressive.

It is Serafin that makes the whole performance enjoyable in the end. I can think of no other Italian conductor, except Toscanini, who could co-ordinate orchestra and singers into such an assured ensemble. As Sackville-West and Shawe-Taylor say in their book *The Record Guide* — "the whole thing sounds authentic, and sweeps the listener along, even if sometimes against his better judgment!" —P.H.R.

*The American Record Guide*



# Record Notes and Reviews

**T**HERE IS IN SOULS a sympathy with sounds, and as the mind is pitched the  
Tear is pleased with melting airs or martial, brisk or grave; some chord in  
unison with what we hear is touched within us, and the heart replies.

—William Couper

## Orchestra

**BERLIOZ:** *Romeo and Juliet*, Op. 17; the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York conducted by Dimitri Mitropolous. Columbia LP ML-4632, \$5.45.

▲THIS IS a spaciouly ranged recording of the "complete orchestral score" but not, alas, of the really complete work. At that it includes more of it than we have been vouchsafed thus far. The sound is not as lush as it might have been but then nobody expects the Philharmonic to make lush sounds and there is enough precision to make up for this defection unless you are a Compleat Romantic about tone. On the other hand the memory of Arturo Toscanini's radio performance obviates any truly objective appraisal of the present disc. This is his music and no one can match him at it except Charles Munch at his best. Mr. Mitropolous has a tendency here to ham it up, as he is wont to do with pre-twentieth century assignments. By way of left-handed compliment, however, it remains to be said that no commercially available LP version to date can touch this one on the whole. —J.L.

April, 1953

**DVORAK:** *Serenade in D minor*, Op. 44; Karl Haas conducting the London Baroque Ensemble. Decca 10" LP DL-7533, \$3.85.

▲CLEAR- bright, forward-sounding reproduction which is just right for this diverting work, scored for two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, one double bassoon, three horns, cello and double bass. The spirit of the village band prevails, as the annotator says, in all except the romantic, long, slow movement which is the heart of the work. A perky march, a minuet — reminiscent of the Czech *styrienne* with an impetuous *furiant*-like trio, and a gay finale form the rest of the *Serenade*. The London Baroque Ensemble turn in a neat, well-ordered performance, in which some unnamed soloists deserved identification. —J.N.

**ELGAR:** *Enigma Variations*, Op. 36; **BRAHMS:** *Variations on a Theme of Haydn*, Op. 56a; Arturo Toscanini conducting the NBC Symphony Orchestra. RCA Victor LP LM-1725, \$5.72.

▲THE "New Orthophonic" recording technique does much to clarify the more elaborately scored Variations than any we have had to date. On one point, however, it fails the noted conductor, for Toscanini's famous pianissimos are not the same as in the concert hall. But the

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new recording gives greater presence to the NBC Symphony than formerly. Hence, to my ears, both these works are best served on LP by Victor's overall realism in engineering.

Toscanini has long been admired for his interpretations of Elgar's *Enigma Variations* and Brahms' *Variations on a Haydn Theme*. In the former, he makes us aware of its mastery of orchestration without treating it as a brilliant show-piece. He clarifies every detail and heightens the expressive content by logical scanning of phrase regardless of bar line. He intensifies those parts of the *Variations* wherein the composer surpassed the whimsical traits of the British mind, and fully substantiates the musical beauty when present. In the Brahms, Toscanini has a true understanding of the form and proportion of the melodic material that derive from the theme. It is as much a feeling for rhythm as for melody, for to linger over the latter is to disrupt the flow of the former. The spirit of this composition must never ebb, and in the end should attain a true climax. Toscanini knows this. For this reason, he gives a memorable performance.

The meaning of the "Enigma" has puzzled the world for a long time. When the composer wrote the melancholy theme with its "halting and sighing melody," his wife asked what it was. To which he replied, in effect, that it is a theme of no consequence, although if it were altered this way or that way, it would conjure up a picture of so-and-so. Neither he nor his wife ever revealed of whom it could remind one. Eluding comment on the origin of inspiration for the theme was a favorite game of Elgar's in later years, and there are some who think that he was indulging in a deception and hugely enjoying the game at the expense of others. Tovey points out that "the 'Enigma', as the theme is called, is said to be a counterpoint to a well-known tune which is not alluded to in the *Variations*. This being so, the 'well-known tune' and the difficulty of guessing what it is are things that do not belong to the music as we have it."

—P.H.R.

#### FRENCH ORCHESTRAL MUSIC;

*Danse macabre*, Op. 40 and *Le Rouet d'Omphale*, Op. 31 (St. Saëns); *Marche joyeuse* (Chabrier); *Pavanne pour une Infante defunte* (Ravel); *Espana Rapsodie* (Chabrier); Ernest Ansermet conducting L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande. London LP LL-696, \$5.95.

▲THE REPRODUCTION has plenty of realism with a rightful range of dynamics. These are polished performances by one of the most dexterous of conductors working in the French idiom. St. Saëns' *Danse macabre* is generally treated in a more obviously showy manner. Like Beecham, Ansermet observes the Gallic culture in the composer's artistry. It makes for a more musical experience which lingers in memory. The same can be said for his version of *Omphale's Spinning Wheel*, which is a far less imaginative score. It is the second face of this disc which offers the most satisfying part of the program. Opening with the zestful and racy *Marche joyeuse* and ending with the colorful and vibrant *Spanish Rhapsodie*, Ansermet has contrasted their *joie de vivre* with Ravel's delicately tinted *Pavanne* on the death of a Royal Infante. Such programming invites duplication of the various selections, particularly because they are so well played. —P.H.R.

GOEB: *Symphony No. 3*; Leopold Stokowski and his Symphony Orchestra; BARTOK: *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion*; Gerson Yessin and Raymond Viola (pianists), Elayne Jones and Alfred Howard (percussion) under the direction of Mr. Stokowski. Victor LP LM-1727, \$5.72.

▲GOEB'S symphony is a happy choice for recording. It is not often that a deserving work becomes so instantly immortalized. Immediately appealing, this strong, athletic and intensely original work is a real contribution to the American LP repertoire. The performance is splendid and in every way worthy of the score. The recording is superb.

The technique of recording reaches the proportions of a major art in this resplendent and imaginative engineering of the Bartok sonata. Stokowski, well-

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known for his interest in recording techniques and its possibilities, here presents a performance the like of which will be heard in no concert-hall. It seems to have been literally "created" on discs and abounds in astonishing aural devices and breath-taking sound-effects. The sonata, a fascinating and vital work, might be termed a natural for such recreation. The possibilities of its tonal combinations, the extreme originality of its percussion writing, are fully exploited. But, no matter how lovely the sound, it is my opinion that the work has been done a disservice. Sometimes important structural passages are overlooked in favor of a new percussion effect; sometimes the inherent musicality of this intensely musical work is sacrificed in the interest of precious sound. For this reason some may prefer the Dial release even though, by comparison, its recording is uneven, but herein the score is treated simply as a musical experience. —D.R.

**MENDELSSOHN:** *Symphony No. 3 in A minor, Op. 56 (Scolch)*; Georg Solti conducting the London Symphony Orchestra. London LP LL-708, \$5.95.

▲THIS, the fifth LP release of this *Symphony*, is the best recording to date. Its sound is rich and full, though there is an edgy quality to the string tone. This is a picturesque work which asks for a conductor familiar with the Scottish locale that inspired Mendelssohn. Of all the foreign conductors who have performed it, Weingartner and Mitropoulos have given us the best interpretations. Solti's firm beat makes for an orderly performance though he does not play up the music's color or its grandeur. There is more poetic feeling in Mitropoulos version, though its recording is dated. His tempo is better in the *finale*; Solti's is too rapid. Klemperer's version is quite good, but not well recorded, and there is some question on the authenticity of its *finale*. The conductor disclaims performing it. Despite this fact, the performance is stimulating and the playing in the *finale* quite as competent as in the other movements. —P.H.R.

April, 1953

**NIELSEN:** *Sinfonia Semplice (Symphony No. 6)*; Danish National Orchestra of the State Radio conducted by Thomas Jensen. Mercury LP MG 10137, \$5.95.

▲IT IS HIGH TIME we had a chance to observe some of the less familiar of the northern lights. Carl Nielsen is one of the most arresting stars in that remote firmament. An unabashed eclectic, he has nonetheless a certain style of his own and it is not unappealing. By turns loud and soft, romantic and *avant-garde*, he seems to gravitate with felicity from the frankly sentimental to the blatantly mechanistic, redolent variously of Varèse as well as his better known Scandinavian contemporaries. On short acquaintance the present work wears well. The second movement, marked *Humoreske*, is a particularly rewarding section full of marvelous satire. Shades of Prokofiev and Sibelius hang over the whole but it stands up just the same. The performance here is, one assumes, authoritative. Mercury has again given us a brilliant recording, not without a bit of tubbiness but altogether adequate. —J.L.

**PROKOFIEV:** *Symphony No. 5, Op. 100*; Danish State Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted by Erik Tuxen. London LP LL 672, \$5.95.

▲THE LATE Dr. Koussevitsky liked this work so much — and who would say him nay? — that he apparently stopped to listen while conducting it for RCA Victor. His performance was stop-and-go and full of interpretative semi-colons for all of its lushness. Artur Rodzinski and the N. Y. Philharmonic did better by the score but their Columbia recording was a *tour de force* rather than an illumination. The present version is the best of the lot. Mr. Tuxen keeps the work moving all the time and still manages to fold in the nuances with no sacrifice of line. His forces do not match the gorgeous sonorities of the Bostonians and they do not vouchsafe the precision of the Philharmonic. But they do realize all of the work's warmth and color and their *esprit* is in every way communicative.

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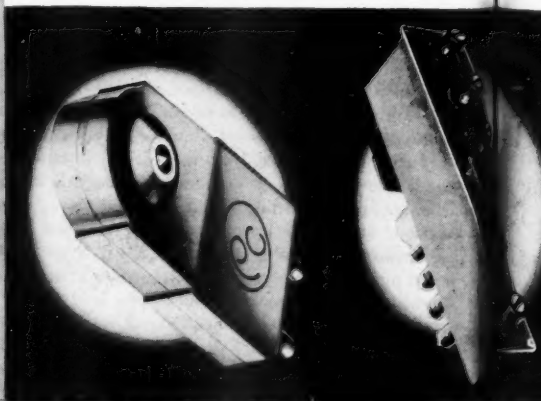
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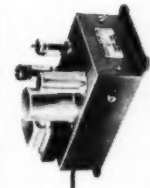
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London's extended range naturally weighs heavily in favor of this latest version.

—J.L.

**RIMSKY-KORSAKOV:** *Le Coq d'or* — Suite; *Capriccio Espagnol*, Op. 34; Ernest Ansermet conducting L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande. London LP LL-694, \$5.95.

▲BOTH of these compositions are well represented on LP, at least in two cases on a single disc. With three splendid performances of the *Golden Cockerel Suite* — Beecham, Désormière and Ansermet, and three of the *Capriccio* — Désormière, Fiedler and Ansermet, the choice will, in my estimation, depend upon the quality of recording. For realism and orchestral presence, the Désormière is in a class by itself. However, both the Beecham and Ansermet recordings are exceptional in their naturalness of balance and tonal beauty. There is more reverberation in the Beecham and Désormière recordings than in the Ansermet. In the former, this makes for more resonant bass and in the latter a sharper brilliance in the highs. It is as much a matter of different concert hall characteristics as differences in engineering technique. In Ansermet's case, it is the character of the reverberation which permits him to achieve the most delicate nuances as well as plangent coloration. The dynamics in his performances are far more subtle because the engineers achieve true *pianissimos* as well as substantial *fortes*. This permits Ansermet to realize poetic qualities in both scores in the most telling manner.

—P.H.R.

**ROSSINI-RESPIGHI:** *Rossianiana*; **CIMAROSA-MALIPIERO:** *La Cimarosiana* and *Overture to Il Matrimonio Segreto*; Warwick Braithwaite conducting the Royal Opera House Orchestra. MGM LP E3013, \$4.85.

▲RESPIGHI'S resurrection of some unremembered pieces of Rossini resulted in the ballet *La Boutique Fantastique* and later the present suite in four movements entitled *Capri* and *Taormina*, *Lamento*, *Intermezzo*, and *Tarantella* "pure blood."

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While of no great weight, this suite has characteristic Rossini melodies which Respighi has decked out with varying harmonic effects. Its *Intermezzo* recalls Tchaikovsky's *Sugar Plum Fairy*; its tempestuous finale reminds one that Rossini had more than his famous vocal *Tarantella* up his sleeve.

Malipiero's restorations of five symphonic fragments by Cimarosa are expertly scored. This is most attractive music which did not deserve to lie neglected on dusty shelves because it was originally intended for other mediums long since forgotten. Since space allowed, the logical filler was Cimarosa's overture to his best remembered opera. Braithwaite performs both the suites with a well disciplined hand but without the ardent urge of the true Italian. The recording is good without being startlingly realistic.

—P.H.R.

**SLAUGHTER ON TENTH AVENUE** and Other Ballet Selections: Arthur Fiedler conducting the Boston Pops Orchestra. RCA Victor LP LM-1126, \$5.72.

▲FOR UNIFORMITY in the performance of the Boston orchestra, one has to turn to Fiedler's discs since Koussevitzky's death. Fiedler has never given us a poor performance and he certainly does not let us down here, though in some cases others may prove more imaginative interpreters. This program is an international banquet, digestible if one is not adverse to too many side dishes. The main course is served up first, a darn good score of its kind but not nearly as substantial as de Falla's three dances from *The Three-Cornered Hat*. Between these we have samples from various ballets (of course) — *Waltz* and *Saturday Night* from Copland's *Rodeo*, Three Dances from Bernstein's *Fancy Free*, *Gavotte* and *Blues* from Gould's *Interplay*, and following de Falla comes Shostakovich's *Polka* from *The Age of Gold*, Khachaturian's *Sabre Dance*, Menotti's *Bacarolle* from *Sebastian*, and lastly *Dance of the Ballerina* and *Danse Russe* from Stravinsky's *Petrouchka*. —J.N.

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**TCHAIKOVSKY:** *Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Op. 64*; Hamburg Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted by Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt. London LP LL-691. \$5.95.

▲THE RECORDING has plenty of liveliness but the string tone tends to be edgy. Schmidt-Isserstedt, one of Germany's foremost conductors, is miscast, in my estimation, as an interpreter of Tchaikovsky. While one cannot assail his musicality, one finds him far less sympathetic to the emotionalism of Tchaikovsky than to that of Haydn and Beethoven. His interpretation tends to stolidity, though the avoidance of excess sentiment is a laudable attribute in the conductor. But there is more dramatic excitement in this symphony than Schmidt-Isserstedt realizes, of which the Kletzki performance reviewed last month reminded us.

—P.H.R.

**WAGNER:** *Goetterdaemmerung-Rhine Journey and Funeral Music; Tristan-Prelude and Love-death*; Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra conducted by William Steinberg. Capitol LP S-8185, \$5.72.

▲STEINBERG'S feeling for Wagner is most admirable. The *Goetterdaemmerung* performances are extremely well thought out. The tensions in the score are always observed, yet the temptation to theatricality is not indulged. Equally well treated are the *Tristan* sections. Taken more slowly than is usual, they gain in sheer tonal beauty what they might lack in excitement. From the standpoint of musical durability these integrated and sincere readings will outstand any number of more impassioned ones. The recording is exceedingly lifelike, though there is excessive reverberation.

—D.R.

Charles Munch. RCA Victor LP LM 1728, \$5.72.

▲IT WOULD SEEM that we didn't need another version of the present work. In all fairness, however, it must be added that Mr. Rubinstein's performance is one of the best, and perhaps the best. The sound is spacious; one suspects the recording was made at Tanglewood and not in Symphony Hall. I took umbrage at the pace of the first movement, which is raced even faster than it was in the old Horowitz-Toscanini recording. Otherwise there could be no cavil with the soloist or the orchestra. Mr. Munch has not maintained the high batting average on wax that was his predecessor's, but his forces certainly were inspired on this occasion. Overall the interpretation does not have the *gemuetlich* affability of the Backhaus version but it has more body than the Serkin. And of course the Horowitz-Toscanini is ruled out on technical grounds. Everything considered this is a welcome addition to the LP catalogues.

—J.L.



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## Concerto

**BRAHMS:** *Concerto No. 2 in B Flat for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 83*; Artur Schnabel (pianist) with the Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by

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**GLAZOUNOV:** *Violin Concerto in A minor, Op. 82*; David Oistrakh with the State Orchestra of the U. S. S. R. conducted by Kiril Kondrashin; **KABALEVSKY:** *Cello Concerto, Op. 49*; Daniel Shafran with the same conductor and orchestra. Vanguard LP 6005, \$5.95.

▲ **THE RECORDING** in the Glazounov is badly distorted, making Oistrakh's violin sound inflated in tonal character and curiously out of focus with the orchestra. Czech Supraphone issued this performance on an LP disc, which I have, wherein the violinist's tone is a thread of gold, in perfect balance with the orchestra. Heard from the Supraphone disc, Oistrakh's performance of this concerto is an amazing demonstration of the violinist's interpretative abilities both technically and expressively — the best on records, but heard from this disc it lacks the tonal appeal of Milstein's. The recording in the Kabalevsky seems less offending, though even here the soloist's tonal quality varies consistently on the upper strings and remains only persuasive soundwise on the lower ones which are rich and full. I understand that Shafran is still in his 'teens and regarded as a *Wunderkind*. He certainly has plenty of musical assurance. Kabalevsky's *Cello Concerto*, with its broad plangency, recalls his *Violin Concerto*. Some of its melodic material suggests folk derivations.

—P.H.R.

**HANDEL:** *Concertos for Organ and Orchestra Nos. 1 and 2, Op. 4*; Jeanne Demessieux (organ) and L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande conducted by Ernest Ansermet. London LP LL-695, \$5.95.

▲ **MILLE DEMESSIEUX** is a little heavy-handed here, but then these works do not roll trippingly from any fingers. At least she enjoys more sympathetic collaboration than Kraft was given in the earlier Vox recording, both from the orchestra and from the engineers. The latter, especially, are due a compliment. M. Ansermet remarkably provides rather pedestrian accompaniment, which is not his wont. The works themselves are 260

grand; the organ was Handel's primary instrument and the eighteen concerts from which the present pair were drawn date from the richest years of his maturity. True, the composer conceived them as much more modest offerings than they have emerged in these elaborate modern settings. Purists are forewarned. But even the most unreconstructed of them will find this disc rewarding. —J.L.

**KHATCHATURIAN:** *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra*; Moura Lympany (piano) with the London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Anatole Fistoulari. London LP LL-692, \$5.95.

▲ **THERE** are still those who talk about London's 78 rpm *ffrr* version of this work, which served to introduce Miss Lympany to the American record buyer and thrilled countless listeners for its realism. This new issue is every bit as exciting and realistic as its predecessor; moreover it is a better recording in matters of balance and quality and a better performance. Miss Lympany, who has been associated with the work since 1940, gives a brilliant and masterly performance. I like the balance of her piano with the orchestra better than any other.

This *Concerto* is, of course, a *tour de force*, but it is by no means a gaudy show as some would have us believe. It has its mechanistic characteristics but they belong to our age. If not Everyman's daily fare, it is a stimulating experience on occasion. —J.N.

**STRAVINSKY:** *Concerto (1923-24)*, Soulima Stravinsky (piano) with the RCA-Victor Orchestra conducted by Igor Stravinsky; *Scherzo a la Russe*; 'the RCA-Victor Orchestra, conducted by Stravinsky; *Pater Noster* and *Ave Maria*, Chorus of Mens and Boys voices, conducted by Stravinsky. RCA-Victor LP 10" LM 7010. \$4.67.

▲ **THE RADICAL** change in Stravinsky's style of composition after *Le Sacre du Printemps* (1912) is well-known. One of the results of this leaner, less opulent, style of composition was a diminution of Stravinsky's appeal to Diaghilev, and a consequent necessity that

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Alberto Erede conducting The New Symphony Orchestra

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Stravinsky seek performances, both as composer and executant, elsewhere. This *Concerto* was for many years a major vehicle for his appearances as piano soloist both here and abroad.

The *Concerto* is closely allied to the *Octet for Winds*, for the piano solo is, in Stravinsky's words, "followed" by a wind band plus tympani and double-basses. Its thematic material is strongly influenced by the toccata-like percussive aspect of the piano, and in most cases, the wind band actually follows the piano in its exposition and development. Even in the slow movement, an almost Bachian *Largo*, the sustained melody is interrupted by piano cadenzas.

The performance by Stravinsky père et fils is exemplary. Soulima, who plays cleanly and brilliantly, is truly *en rapport* with his father. Igor has a way of extracting exactly what he wants from the excellent musicians whom RCA-Victor assembles for his sessions.

Both the *Scherzo* and the choral selections were previously issued as "fillers"

in 78 rpm sets several years ago. The *Scherzo* is strictly utility Stravinsky, a humorous work composed for Paul Whiteman in 1941. The two church choruses were originally composed to Slavonic texts; in this later guise they are companion pieces to the *Mass*, and share its almost medieval asceticism of tone and expression. —Phil Hart

## Chamber Music

**BEETHOVEN:** *Sonatas for 'Cello and Piano* — *Op. 5, No. 1; Op. 5, No. 2; Op. 69; Op. 102, No. 1; Op. 102, No. 2;* Janos Starker and Abba Bogin. Period LP set 562, 2 discs, \$11.90.

**BEETHOVEN:** *Sonatas in C and D, Op. 102, Nos. 1 and 2;* Antonio Janigro and Carlo Zecchi. Westminster LP WL-5180, \$5.95.

▲THE RECORDING in both cases is excellent with somewhat better clarity of piano tone in the Westminster. Starker's tone tends to ruggedness on occasion but his emotionalism is well schooled. He is a great cellist. Those who do not favor consistent refinement in the cello music of Beethoven (something the composer did not cultivate) may feel, as I do, that Starker's performances are more exciting and emotionally elevating than are Janigro's or Casals'. For those who admire subtlety and polish, the Janigro-Zecchi performances are recommended. Janigro has a truer co-partner in Zecchi than Starker has in Bogin, though the latter is a proficient player. —F.A.L.

**MOZART:** *String Quartets No. 8 in F (K. 168) and No. 17 in B Flat, K. 458 (The Hunt);* the Griller String Quartet. London LP LL 658, \$5.95.

▲THE GRILLERS are a serious lot who breathe little animation into their livelier assignments. On the other hand it is questionable whether the works at hand are not both of them rather more sober products than most of their immediate companions. They do have

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## DAZZLING NEW FRANCESCATTI RELEASE

Two concerti on a single record. Prokofiev No. 2 in G Minor, Bach No. 2 in E Major. Dimitri Mitropoulos conducts the New York Philharmonic-Symphony. Exclusively on Columbia "LP."

their moments of levity but surely the *Andante* of the early No. 8 and the *Adagio* of the *Hunt*, written a decade later, are among the most somberly intense movements Mozart ever set down. The present executants approach this music earnestly and find no cause for carefree spirits; that is their prerogative and I favor their persuasion. The ensemble is resonant and resilient; its tone not pretty but quite full. The Amadeus recording of No. 17 offers stiff competition indeed, more so than those of the Loewenguths or the Roths. But the inclusion here of the wonderful No. 8 makes all the difference. A first performance on LP, it is extremely welcome. The engineers have provided excellent balance and the fidelity range is amply wide.

—J.L.

**MOZART:** *Piano Quartets in G minor, K. 478 and in E flat, K. 493*; Clifford Curzon and Members of the Amadeus Quartet. London LP LL-679, \$5.95.

**MOZART:** *Piano Quartet in G minor, K. 478*; **BEETHOVEN:** *Quartet in E flat, Op. 16* (piano and strings); New York Quartet (M. Horszowski, Milton Katims, Alexander Schneider, Frank Miller). Columbia LP ML-4627, \$5.45.

▲A DISGRUNTED publisher protested the tragic character of Mozart's *G minor Quartet* and requested he forget a second work contracted for. Later, Mozart wrote his *E flat* one concentrating on poetic beauty. The world has forgotten the publisher of the *G minor* and acclaimed both works, and many a listener has wished that Mozart had returned to the medium of the piano quartet oftener.

It is surprising that Columbia re-issues another *G minor*, considering it has a fine performance already on LP, linked to another of the *E flat*, by George Szell and Members of the Budapest String Quartet (ML-4080). The New York Quartet, an ensemble new to me, for all its admirable musicality does not supplant the work of the former ensemble. They do, however, engage our attention favorably with their well played performance of Beethoven's early opus (the first LP version in this form), though I

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must confess my preference for *Opus 16* lies with its original form for piano and wind instruments (of which no satisfactory version exists on records).

London, in mating Curzon with members of the Amadeus Quartet, has achieved the happiest ensemble playing of the several arrangements to date of these quartets. It is as much a matter of reproduction as of performance. The recording quality of the London disc is exceptionally clear and clean without the heavy bass reverberation of the Columbia issues and past 78-rpm ones, which to me does not serve the perspicuity of this composer's music. The sound from the otherwise excellent recording of Columbia befits the Beethoven. In matters of style and interpretation, Szell and the Budapest group are preferable to the New York ensemble. But Curzon and the Amadeus group supply more nuance of line and phrase, and in the slow movements it is Curzon who proves the most sensitive pianist since Schnabel. I doubt that many listeners will wish to miss London's new contribution to Mozart literature on records.

—P.H.R.

**RESPIGHI:** *String Quartet No. 2 (Doric)*;

**MALPIERO:** *String Quartet No. 7*;

**PICK-MANGIAGALLI:** *Three Fugues for Quartet*; Quartetto della Scala.

Urania LP 7075, \$5.95.

**BOCCHERINI:** *Quartet in D, Op. 6,*

*No. 1*; **de GIARDINI:** *Sonata a tre in E flat*; **PUCCINI:** *Crisanlemi*;

Quartetto della Scala. Urania LP 7074, \$5.95.

**BOHNANYI:** *Serenade in C, Op. 10, for Violin, Viola and Cello*; *Quartet No. 2 in D flat, Op. 15*; Arnold Eidus (violin), David Mankovitz (viola), George Ricci (cello) in Trio and with (Louis Graeler (violin) in Quartet. Stradivari LP 614, \$6.95.

▲THE QUARTETTO della Scala is a group of musicians from the famous opera house in Milan. If opera supplies their main subsistence, these players are not dominated by its prevailing character for they have a true feeling and style for chamber music. Moreover, in their freedom of expression one senses a relaxation

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which makes their playing most appealing. Rapport and fluency prevail, and also consistently ingratiating tonal quality. This is Italian playing from the best old schooling. The recording of this foursome does them full justice without the aid of extended range's sharpening of high string tone. The sound has realism in intimacy with moderate reverberation.

Respighi's *Quartet*, with its modal opening movement, is music of light and delicate texture, prevailing in poetic sentiment. Played without pause, it seems over-long on first acquaintance as its poetic mood is unrelieved by any dramatic strength. The Malipiero work — in one movement — is of more spirited substance — a beautifully blended pattern of old and new styles, rich in contrapuntal texture and rhythmic variety. This is the most enduring opus on the record. Pick-Mangiagalli's three fugues, derived more from German classical sources than from Italian, are smoothly and ingeniously written. The outer fugues are in fast tempi, the middle one an expressive Adagio. While well played, this is music which one feels would have profited by greater breadth of tone.

In the 18th-century works of Boccherini and de Giardini, the *Quartetto della Scala* evidences its fluent, Italian style. Here, the attractive melodies and harmonic beauty are matched by grace and expressive tonal quality. Though the New Italian Quartet have performed the Boccherini previously, the present ensemble cannot be underrated in comparison. If the de Giardini opus lacks the merit of the Boccherini, its melodic content will nonetheless appeal for its classical charm. Puccini's piece, written to the memory of Duke Amadeo di Savoia, is little more than a trifle of consistently sweet sentiment, which bears a curious flowery title.

The Stradivari group are back again, honoring Dohnanyi, who is now teaching in Florida. Both of these works are among the composer's most pleasing. The *Serenade* is of lesser substance than the *Quartet*, more delicate in substance but often punctuated with humor and wit. Its third movement, a fugal scherzo,

is a delight.

The *Quartet* is a mature opus, somewhat Brahmsian in character though individual in its fine craftsmanship and melodic content, with a suggestion of the composer's Hungary in its final movement where the first violin has impassioned gypsy-like passages. An old favorite of mine, I welcome its acquisition on LP. The playing of these works is musically proficient. The *Quartet* is handled with fine spontaneity and rich tonal effects. The recording has live quality and an atmospheric effect suggesting reverberant hall quality. It is especially effective in the *Quartet*. —P.H.R.

**SCHUBERT:** "Arpeggione" *Sonata in A Minor*; **SCHUMANN:** *Fantasiesluecke*, Op. 73 and *Drei Romanzen*, Op. 94; Maurice Gendron (cello) and Jean Francaix (piano). London LP LL 654, \$5.95.

▲THE *Arpeggione Sonata* is one of those curiosities which is frequently overlooked simply because it is a curiosity. In this case the freak element is the fact that it was composed for a bastard instrument of short life — a kind of cross between a cello and a guitar. But the music is a charming example of Schubert's most fluid and fluent style, and one is always grateful when a first rate artist addresses himself to it with the loving attention it deserves. The most felicitous of several adaptations is that for cello, and one is especially thankful for the performance tendered by M. Gendron. His tone is more lyric than not, fortunately, and his execution is letter perfect. The *Fantasiesluecke* and the *Romanzen* were written originally for clarinet and piano and oboe and piano, respectively, and I happen to prefer them in their proper context (will Columbia ever resuscitate its marvelous Goossens performance of the *Romanzen*?) but there can be no reasonable objection to these tasteful transcriptions. They are only vehicles for the cellist, anyway, and as such they serve nicely to convince us of M. Gendron's endowments. Jean Francaix contributes as sensitive and sensible accompaniment as anyone could ask. —J.L.

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## Keyboard

**SMETANA:** *Quartet in E minor (From my life)*; **DVORAK:** *Quartet in F, Op. 96 (American)*; Curtis String Quartet. Westminster LP WL-5199, \$5.95.

**DVORAK:** *Quartet in F, Op. 96 (American)*; The Hungarian Quartet; *Suite in D, Op. 39 (Czech)*; Henry Swoboda conducting the Winterthur Symphony Orchestra. Concert Hall LP 1157, \$5.95.

▲CLEAR, natural and lifelike reproduction without booming bass is found in the Westminster disc. This combination of quartets has been issued twice before on LP. Such duplications present a problem to critic and listener. For all the fine musicianship evidenced in the Koeckert and Stradivari ensembles, the Curtis group are closest to the heart of the Smetana. Over a decade ago, they recorded this work and it is evident in their playing that long association has developed the fullest understanding of its power and direction. Here, the intensity of the music is fully exploited, penetrating to the very heart of the composer's youthful summations of life's experiences.

Dvorak's "American" quartet sustains its popularity as much for its ideas, simple in significance, as for its idiomatic characteristics related to our own soil. For me, it lacks the tensions and inventive power of his later quartets in *G* and *A flat*, either of which would have been the more ideal companion for the Smetana. The Curtis group plays it handsomely, substantiating its rhythmic life with firm yet fluent movement. The Hungarian Quartet also gives a fine performance of this opus, tonally more ingratiating and dynamically more subtly contrasted, but rhythmically less mettlesome. Yet, this is a performance which is especially appreciable for the homogeneity of coloration and expressive quality of the ensemble. It is backed with a delightful orchestral suite in the national idiom, well played by Swoboda and the Winterthur Orchestra. The recording in the Concert Hall disc is excellent. —P.H.R.

April, 1953

**BEETHOVEN:** *Country Dances and Minuets; Variations on a Swiss Song; Sonatinas in G and E flat*. Opus LP disc 6002, \$5.95. **TCHAIKOVSKY:** *Pieces for the Piano — Children's Album*. Opus LP 6001, \$5.95. Poldi Zeitlin (piano).

▲MISS ZEITLIN, niece of the late Artur Schnabel, shared with her uncle an interest in the piano literature intended for the young. These discs, the first of a planned series called "Masterwork Series for the Young Musician," presents moderately difficult and unhackneyed music which should make most youngsters take more warmly to their instruments. The Beethoven selections, with the exception of the *Minuet in G*, are not too familiar but all charming. The dances, six in each group, are instantly appealing. The *E flat Sonatina*, a miniature, is not half so profound but twice appealing. The



## IN TREMENDOUS DEMAND!

A new collection of this great artist's work recorded shortly before his untimely death. Preserved in the full splendor of Columbia sound. Just released! *Exclusively on Columbia "Lp."*

Tchaikovsky pieces, originally entitled *Vingt-quatre pièces faciles à la Schumann*, are piano tidbits more in the salon than the true fantasy genre. Their charm lies in their unassuming qualities and Miss Zeitlin's sensitive yet casual approach enhances their appeal. In the Beethoven, the pianist performs with easy assurance and an élan which should make many a young pianist wish to emulate her. The recording has a boxed-in quality and a lack of reverberation, but there is a clean delineation of the piano tone. —D.R.

**BRAHMS:** *Variations on a Theme by Paganini*; Andor Foldes (piano); Decca 10" LP DL 7532, \$3.85.

▲**FOLDES'** Hungarian background and training serve him well in this excellently recorded performance of some of the most difficult piano music ever written. Known for his Bartok recordings, he brings a Slavic warmth to this essentially static score, in addition to all the technical prowess it could wish for. His articulation is superb and, even in the most fiendishly difficult sections, the inner melodies emerge, the detail is always crisp. He thus, more important than anything else, makes the music sound interesting. —D.R.

**FRANCK:** *Grande Pièce Symphonique in F sharp minor*; *Cantabile*; **LISZT:** *Variations on Bach's Weinen, Klagen*; Edouard Nies-Berger (organ); Concert Hall LP CHS 1145, \$5.95.

▲**THE FRANCK** is the second in the series of *Six Pièces pour Grand Orgue*, dating from 1860. Liszt has declared that "these pieces have their place beside the masterpieces of Bach." Since Liszt's idea of Bach is well indicated in his own variations on the continuo of the *Weinen, Klagen* cantata, his remark may be interpreted as private opinion. The Franck is a long, juicy and profoundly un-Baroque work; the Liszt is a set of highly chromatic exercises. The latter sounds better on the piano as recorded on Bartok Records. I should like to hear Nies-Berger in some other, more interesting organ works. These scores are fairly

ungrateful and about all one can say is that he seems to have captured the intentions of the composers. The recording, made at the Brooklyn Church of the Messiah, is adequate. —D.R.

**MOZART:** *Sonatas No. 32 in B Flat, K. 454* and *No. 33 in E Flat, K. 481*; Reinhard Peters (violin) and Charles Rosen (piano). London LP LL 674, \$5.95.

▲**THE ARTISTS** represented here are new to me, and the liner is devoid of the customary biographical paragraphs. Messrs. Peters and Rosen deserve more than anonymity. Their collaboration is excellent and their individual talents are extraordinary. Neither is addicted to the notion that Mozart sonatas must be handled as Dresden china. They play with that gusto which is the essence of Mozartean style. The violin is perhaps a shade too predominant, but then Mr. Peters does own a velvety, Busch-like tone. The recording is up to London's current standards. Comparatively, this performance is way ahead of the Allegro version of the K. 454. For the K. 481 this is an LP première. —J.L.

**PIANO MINIATURES:** *Passacaglia in G minor* (Handel); *Turkish March* (Mozart); *Serenade* (Schubert-Liszt); *Music Box* (Nicholas); *Music Box Lullaby* (Thomson); *Capriccio* (W. F. Bach); *Songs Without Words, No. 4 in G minor, Op. 102* and *No. 1 in C, Op. 62*; *Consolation, Op. 62* (Dussek); *Bolero and Galop* (Casella); Maryla Jonas (piano). Columbia LP ML 4624, \$5.45.

▲**EXCELLENT PIANO** recording. Miss Jonas' program is of the salon or lady's club genre. She plays it very nicely with a romantic touch, even in the Handel, Dussek and Bach pieces which occupy the first face. This is the type of program to lie back and relax to and just enjoy the caressing fingers of the performer. —J.N.

**SCHUMANN:** *Davidbueandler Tuenze*; Adrian Aeschbacher (piano); Decca 10" LP disc, DL 7531, \$3.85.

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▲THIS CURIOUS set of character-pieces, neither profound nor trivial, contains a great deal that is charming. In the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, Schumann introduced a number of characters, among them Florestan and Eusebius, the names he had chosen for the two poles of his personality. "the fire-brand and the dreamer." These fanciful creations wander through the *Davidsbündler Tänze* which, in the manner of an E. T. A. Hoffman romance, is devoted to an explication of their characters. Mr. Aeschbacher's Eusebius is a most engaging young man, not nearly so elegiac as usual and much more good-natured. His Florestan, on the other hand, is something of a rowdy and seems given to much posturing. There is nothing wrong with the performance besides this difference of approach. Some may prefer Ray Lev's balanced but tepid characterization. The recording is first-rate. —D.R.

**SCHUMANN:** *Four Sketches, Op. 58; Canon in B Minor*; **MENDELSSOHN:** *Sonata No. 2 in C Minor, Op. 65*; Richard Elsasser (organ). MGM LP E 3007, \$4.85.

▲WOW! THIS is the first recording in which the so-called Dynamic Accentor has been employed. One doesn't know whether to give all credit to this new electronic gadget — a sort of combination volume expander and tone enricher for small-voiced organs — or to confer the encomium on the Hammond Museum up in Gloucester for its amazing acoustical properties. On the other hand, maybe MGM has worked up a new technique; if so there is modestly no such claim on the liner. In any event this is a superbly clean and clear disc, better balanced and much better sounding than any of its kind I have encountered. The strictly musical interest is not so high, unfortunately, even though all of these performances are LP premieres. Schumann's *Sketches* were written for the now defunct pedal-piano and possess little inherent affinity for the modern organ; the Mendelssohn has more substance but it, too, is something less than a masterpiece. Mr. Elsasser plays every-

thing in his familiarly deft way with no pretensions to profundity, which is quite proper and tends to enhance the engaging qualities of this music. —J.L.

## Voice

**BACH:** *Mass in B minor — Qui sedes and Agnus Dei; St. Matthew Passion — Grief for sin rends the guilty heart within; St. John Passion — All is fulfilled; HANDEL:* *Samson — Return, O God of hosts; Messiah — O thou that telleth good tidings to Zion and He was despised and rejected of men; Judas Macabaeus — Father of Heaven; Kathleen Ferrier (contralto) with Sir Adrian Boult conducting the London Philharmonic Orchestra. London LP LL-688, \$5.95.*

▲THE DARK lustrous beauty of Miss Ferrier's voice has never been better served in a recording; moreover, the realistic presence of singer and orchestra is a gratifying experience. The dignity and restraint of the wonderfully endowed contralto is praiseworthy; she does not "emote" as so many singers are tempted to do nor permit her tones to become lacrimose. The result is her *Messiah* arias made a distinctly different impression on me — one which assured me I would return to them often with enjoyment. I was particularly moved with her singing of the *Judas Macabaeus* aria, which is far from a grateful piece. But it was in the arias from Bach's *St. John* and *St. Matthew Passion* that Miss Ferrier moved me most with her expressively modulated phrases. Hers is an oratorio recital, thanks to the reverent cooperation of Sir Adrian Boult, which will be remembered. The fine reproduction in my copy was somewhat marred in the Handel side by recurrently annoying swishes but even these I could live with considering the quality of the performances. —J.N.

**MME. GEORI BOUE RECITAL:** *Faust — Roi de Thulé and Air des bijoux* (Gounod); *Hérodiade — Il est doux, il est bon* (Massenet); *Louise — Depuis*

le jour (Charpentier); Geori Boué (soprano) with Paris Opera Orchestra conducted by George Sebastian; *Mandoline*; *Il pleure dans mon cœur*; *Green* (Debussy); *Clair de lune*; *Les roses d'Ispahan*; *Au bord de l'eau* (Fauré) *Chanson triste*; *Phidylé* (Duparc); Geori Boué with Maurice Faure (piano). Urania LP 7070, \$5.95.

▲WHILE Mme. Geori Boué remains an operatic favorite in Paris, I am inclined to think that she is essentially a singing actress and should be seen as well as heard. Her vocal production is not without its inequalities; her middle voice is pinched and often child-like in sound while her upper tones vary from nasality to beauty in sound. Her *Faust* scene has more fluency than in the Victor set; the *Hérodiade* aria is well sung. Her *Depuis le jour* lacks the true ecstasy that is indicated; she works too hard to make her rendition of this aria completely enjoyable. Memories of Ninon Vallin and other sopranos intrude upon one's memory. In the songs, she has moments in which she achieves an appealing intimacy of mood, though she lacks the overall ingratiating qualities of Vallin and Maggie Teyte. The singer is almost too prominently disposed in both the arias and songs which gives the orchestra and piano a background effect. The recording otherwise is adequate. —J.N.

ELIZABETHAN LOVE SONGS AND HARPSICHORD PIECES; Hugues Cuenod (tenor) and Claude Jean Chiasson (harpsichord). Lyricord LP LL 37, \$5.95.

▲FROM ANY POINT of view this is a gem of a recording. M. Cuenod does not own a great voice but he uses it with more taste than almost any other man in the business today. His pitch is next to flawless; his enunciation is flawless; his breath control is a marvel. He spins out the tortuously long lines with infinite art. Dowland's *Weep You No More, Sad Fountains*, for one, has never been sung more beautifully in my hearing. The program includes also Rosseter's *When Laura Smiles*, Jones' *So to Bed*, *Sweet Muse* and *Sweet Kate*, Pilkington's *Under-*

*neath a Cypress Tree*, the anonymous *Drink to Me Only With Thine Eyes* and *Have You Seen But a Whyte Lily Grow?* and three other exquisite Dowland songs; *Sorrow, Sorrow Stay*, *These Self-loving Lads* and *Now, O Now, I Needs Must Part*. The interspersed harpsichord pieces are drawn from the *Parthenia* and from the second volume of the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book. M. Chiasson plays them straight, with little variety of registration but quite enough to limn their dulcet period character. —J.L.

#### FAMOUS OPERATIC EXCERPTS:

*L'Elisir d'amore* — *Udile, udile, o rustici*; *Don Pasquale* — *Ah! un foco insolito* (Donizetti); *La Gazza Ladra* — *Il mio piano e preparato* (Rossini); Fernando Corena (basso); *Il Trovatore* — *Il balen del suo sorriso* (Verdi); *Il Barbieri di Siviglia* — *Largo al factotum* (Rossini); *I Pagliacci* — *Prologo* (Leoncavallo); Aldo Protti (baritone). L'Orchestra de la Suisse Romande, conducted by Alberto Erede. London 10" LP LS-701, \$4.95.

▲THE SINGER and orchestral presence in these recordings is most realistic. Corena, Italy's leading buffo, shows his versatility in his selections, the last of which is a particularly amusing Rossini aria.

Aldo Protti, who sang so impressively as Amonastro in London's *Aida*, is not only a gifted singer but a fine musician. His *Largo* is sung with style and ease, his *Il balen* with expressive smoothness, and his *Prologo* with authority. His is not a large voice but his expressive quality and youthful assurance make him a personable artist. —J.N.

#### FRENCH RENAISSANCE VOCAL MUSIC:

*Mille regretz de vous abandonner* (Josquin des Pres); *Ce moys de may* (Jannequin); *Hélas, mon Dieu* (Le Jeune); *Bonjour, mon cœur* (Lasso); *Noblesse gil au cœur* (Costeley); *Quand mon mary vient de dehors* (Lasso); *A déclarer mon affection* (Anon); *Mignonne, allons voir si la rose* (Costeley); *Hau, hau, hau les boys* (Sermisy); *Reveyr venir du printemps* (Lejeune);

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*Vous me tuez si doucement* (Mauduit); *Tu ne l'enten pas* (Le Jeuen); *Au joli boys* (Sernisy); *Francion rint l'autre jour* (Bonnet); *Chant des oiseaulx* (Jannequin); Vocal and instrumental ensemble conducted by Nadia Boulanger. Decca LP DL 9629. \$5.85.

▲MLLE. BOULANGER may well be the world's most persuasive advocate for the music of older days, simply because she is not bound by tradition or scholarly research, preferring rather to let it come from the heart. This doctrine, to be sure, would certainly prove fatal to most practitioners, and it would never do to recommend it to any other musician. But Boulanger has lived so long with the music she presents, and she is blessed with so just an innate sense of style, that whatever she does comes to exciting life, whether it be Josquin, Monteverdi, Bach or Fauré. In the present varied and demanding program it would be hard to quibble about details, although some professors using the record for historical illustration might be inclined to argue a point or two.

In some of the more sustained and serious numbers the voices are doubled with instruments. The first so treated, LeJeune's psalm *Hélas, mon Dieu*, is amazingly modern and chromatic in its texture. It is sung with strong dynamic contrasts, exciting *crescendi* and *diminuendi*. Lasso's *Bonjour, mon coeur* is the most delicate of love songs and can easily go wrong, but not here. Again we have a religious mood in Costeley's *Noblesse git au coeur* and the anonymous *A déclarer mon affection*. The more familiar *Quand mon mary* is done sharply and biting, and *Mignonne, allons voir* with great simplicity. The lusty drinking song *Hau, hau, hau les boys* is well contrasted with the delicate performance accorded *Revercy venir du printemps* (in which every detail of the part writing stands forth with admirable clarity). Then after the gentle and lovely *Vous me tuez si doucement* comes the Rabelaisian *Tu ne l'enten pas*. *Au joli boys* is unaccustomedly solemn and sonorous, and the lyricism of *Francion rint l'autre jour* is perfectly in balance. Finally a spirited

and graphic performance of Jannequin's masterpiece in which all the birds of the forest are imitated. The reproduction is satisfactory enough though somewhat inclined to overloading.

—P.L.M.

#### SEVEN CENTURIES OF SACRED

MUSIC: Works of Pérotin, Léonin, Dufay, Benet, Gombert, Schuetz, Bach, Albert, Hammerschmidt, Franck, Handel, Couperin, Pergolesi, Mozart and others; Yves Tinayre (tenor) with instrumental and choral ensemble. Decca set DX 120, two LP discs, \$11.70.

▲WHEN THE LUMEN recordings from which this LP set was made were first imported, about twenty years ago, they offered something new and otherwise unobtainable, and they were greeted with hosannahs from the connoisseurs. In those days there was at least a grain of truth in such a statement as this from the historical notes: "Only the *Creation* of Haydn and the *Requiem* of Mozart are familiar to the public." In those days, too, one could listen gratefully to a tenor voice in an aria written for soprano or to a polyphonic motet reduced to a vocal solo with a background of strings because one knew one would not hear it otherwise.

In the last decade we have seen many changes. It is no longer news that Haydn wrote 26 masses — at least ten of them are now available on LP — and with so much Bach and Mozart offered in its original form we are less likely to thrill to their arias transposed. And granting Mr. Tinayre's musicianship and sincerity, this is a long and overwhelming program to be sustained by one man's voice (for though he is assisted by a choir, an organ and various other appropriate instruments this remains essentially a solo recital); most listeners should be warned against trying to hear it all at one sitting.

The transfer to LP has been accomplished with skill and general success. Those who are especially interested in the music of history will be happy to have it so neatly packaged, but something should have been done to bring the notes up to date.

—P.L.M.

**THIS IS MY VIENNA** — *Old Viennese Songs, Melodies and Marches*; Hilde Gueden (soprano) with Orchestra conducted by Kurt Adler. London 10" LP LS-680, \$4.95.

▲A MORE attractive little record than *This is My Vienna* has not come along in many a moon. Instead of just stringing nine or ten waltzes humorlessly together, Max Schonherr's joyous arrangement provides bits of march music and other fragments of orchestration connecting Hilde Gueden's songs, extolling Vienna.

The result is that the little disc makes sense. It emerges as a unit — fragments of atmosphere which combine as a whole to build up the appeal of one of the world's most enchanting cities.

Miss Gueden, a Viennese, sings with infectious gaiety and with a springlike clarity of tone, which is delightful to hear. The orchestra, under Kurt Adler, adds greatly with its zithers, fiddles, and other local effects. The way this little record has been put together may point the way to a new trend. John Gutman's notes, on the back of the jacket, are also something novel and appealing. —M. de S.

## RECORD ROUNDUP

**THERE ARE** two new releases of Haydn's *Seven Last Words of Christ*. The first, in the familiar string quartet version, is performed by the Schneider Quartet (Haydn Society LP 39); the second, in the revised version for soloists, chorus and orchestra is performed by Gueden, Patzak, the Salzburg Dome Choir and the Mozarteum Orchestra conducted by Messner (Remington 199-66-2 discs). I particularly enjoyed the reverent performance of the latter, perhaps because I have always preferred the vocal arrangement of this work. The recording is clear but unfortunately marred by an audible hiss, prevailing throughout. This is not the case in the Haydn Society release, which is well recorded. The playing of the Schneider 270

Quartet lacks the intensity and ardor of the Amadeus Quartet.

An inexpensive and thoroughly competent version of Bach's *B minor Mass* is available in a Regent set (MG-6000 — 3 discs), with pleasing singers — all new to me. The recording is not in the class of the fine Westminster release as excessive reverberation often blurs the clarity of line of choral passages and the surfaces are marred by the old 78 rpm hiss.

Colosseum's new Italian series have varying merits in music and performances. Casella's *Scarlattiana* (CLPS-1038) is the best of the releases both musically and artistically. The Bettinelli *Sinfonia da Camera*, for String Orchestra, is uninspired music, but the Catalani pieces on the reverse face — *A Sera* and *Serenatella* — have a quaint charm (CLPS-1040). These performances are not too good. Halffter's *Sinfonietta in D* (CLPS-1041) is effective music in its seriousness of purpose, but its companion piece a symphony by Napoli is *pastiche* or *tutti-frutti*, as some would say. Adequate describes the performances. All of these Italian recordings lack true orchestral presence — the effect is like listening to music through a half-open door. Moreover, the reproduction tends to fracture on the high end.

Three *Spanish Dances* by Granados and *Danzas fantasticas* by Turina are played by the Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Wilhelm Schuechter (MGM-E3018). The recording is good. The performances of the Granados lack the essential excitement that native conductors like Jorda and Arbos bring to this music, though the realistic reproduction offsets this to some extent. Schuechter's Turina is too heavy-handed and not at all satisfactory to one who recalls the 78 rpm versions by Eugene Goossens.

From Russian sources comes Period's issues of Kalinnikov's *Symphony No. 2 in A* (SPL-566) and Rimsky-Korsakov's *Symphony No. 3 in C* coupled with Gliere's *Concerto for Harp and Orchestra* (SPL-567). The Kalinnikov symphony is not an important work; it is by no means as attractive as his first, though rhythmically it has similarity. It is an

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excessively motor-driven score which tends to weary the listener. The performance by the National Radio Orchestra conducted by Rachlin is probably competent, but the recording lacks proper reverberation — its sound is too flat. The best I can say about the Rimsky symphony is that it is a pleasant trifle, exotic and colorful. It is well played by the same orchestra conducted by Gauk. The recording is only adequate. Gliere's *Harp Concerto* is the best work, romantic in character but gratefully written for the harp. It is well played by a harpist identified as Dulova. Whether intended by the composer, the effect of the performance in the recording is one which varies the balance between the harp and the orchestra — it is over-prominent sometimes and remote othertimes; otherwise the recording is adequate.

Period's issue of *Gregorian Chants* by the Choeur de Moine Trappistes of the Cistercian Abbey (SPL-569) is an excellent recording, suggesting the environs of a church. The disc is marked Vol. I. A series is planned to take in all the services. Side A, by the monks, opens with *Salve Regina* and contains among seven selections the solemn *Magnificat*, accompanied by the Monastery bells, and the *Libera Me* from the funeral liturgy, sung during a processional into the cloister. This side of the disc was awarded the *Grand Prix de Disque* in France in 1951. Side B offers eight chants by Nuns at a Benedictine Monastery.

Oceanic issues Bizet's and Schubert's first symphonies in performances by the Paris Radio Orchestra conducted by Rene Leibowitz (LP 33). This versatile conductor turns in competent performances though his tendency to caress the melodies of both works too much results in stylistic preciousness. The fidelity of the recording is generally good.

With the same orchestra and pianist Helffer, Leibowitz on Period disc 568 turns his attentions to Schoenberg's *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra*, a work romantic in style and suggestive of Mahler. This is a much leaner composition than the early tone poems — *Verklaerte Nacht* and *Pelleas and Melisande* — and, in my

estimation, more easily assimilated. It is a work of sustaining interest. Performance seems to project music in a favorable light, though the piano tone tends to a percussive sound which may be what the composer intended. On the other side are the *Three Piano Pieces, Op. 11* and the *Piano Suite, Op. 25*. The recording is adequate on both sides.

Period has also issued a group of Viennese operettas — Milloecker's *Der Belletstudent* (disc RL-1901), Stolz's *Zwei Herzen in 3/4 Takt* (RL-1902), Oscar Strauss' *A Waltz Dream* (RL-1903) and *The Last Waltz* (RL-1904). All are well conducted by Stolz and the singers are good, performing with evident relish. The recording is good in each case. *Belletstudent* is one of the finest examples of Viennese operettas in its class and rates with the best of Johann Strauss. The stories of all these operettas are nonsensical, but the appealing music gives them life.

**L**ISTENERS who enjoy opera comique will do well to look into the series that Vox Productions has issued — some nine in all to date; the majority of which derive from France, though a few come from Vienna.

The only drawback to these Vox recordings is the lack of any libretto, which one can assume is owing to copyright restrictions.

Lecocq's *La Fille de Madame Angot* (disc 20,000) has some racy rhythms and sparkling melodies. The singing in all of the presentations is uneven; there are, however, some good voices in this first issue. Planquette's *Les Cloches de Corneville* (disc 20,100) is an operetta which old timers will recall — it was popular in the 1880s in its English productions and enjoyed many revivals into our own century. It has clever lyrics and some good tunes. The artists are competent. *The Beautiful Galatea* by von Suppe (disc 20,200) comes from Vienna. Robert Heger is the conductor and the singers are competent. This is a musically delightful score, full of waltz tunes which are always agreeable to the ear. Messager's *Monsieur Beaucaire* (disc 20,300)

has good singers (several of the same artists heard in *Les Cloches de Corneville*). Based on Booth Tarkington's famous play, this operetta is rich in melody of a piquant quality. Here's a score that deserves to be sung in English, which once was a great hit in New York and London, with Maggie Teyte as the leading lady in the latter city.

Henri Christine's *Phi-Phi* (disc 20,400) was a big success in France after World War I. Its premiere came two days after the Armistice. With its saucy plot and gay melodies, it appealed to the Parisians. *Phi-Phi* is a nickname for Phidias, the Greek sculptor. It would be pleasant to say that *Phi-Phi* has survived its 35 years, but the truth of the matter remains it sounds rather dull today, which may be owing to the fact that it is not too well done on the record. Anyway, Christine lacked the musical sparkle and wit of an Offenbach.

Vox's abridged version of Offenbach's *La Belle Helene* (disc 20,500) has better singers than the Renaissance set. To my ears, it also has more appeal as a lot of dead-wood has been left out. Johann Strauss' *The Merry War* (disc 20,600, via Vienna) is a run-of-the-mill musical comedy, not up to the famous Waltz King's usual high standard. It is poorly sung.

Schubert's *Das Dreimäderlhaus* (disc 20,800), on the other hand, is good entertainment. It is an operetta which makes use of Schubert's melodies, arranged by one Berte. A war-time (1916) success in Vienna and Berlin, it found favor with the public though the critics resented Schubert's music "being used as popular hits in an operetta." It is a well made work of its kind — its story about Schubert and his friends being a plausible though very sentimental one. It is well sung and recorded.

Offenbach's *La Vie Parisienne* (disc 21,000) does not stand up in comparison with the recent Jennie Tourel disc (Columbia ML-4608), despite the fact that it has more excerpts. The singing is only competent. The reproduction of the above series varies in quality, but none is unsatisfactory. —F.A. Levin

# PISTON: Quintet for Piano and Strings

MARTINU: Quartet No. 6; Walden String Quartet, Earl Wild (piano); WCFM LP 14, \$5.95.

▲PISTON'S 1949 *Quintet* is one of his best later works. Tight without seeming strained, lean without sounding bare, it is rich in wit, humor and fancy — all qualities in which the composer excels. The performance scarcely could be bettered. It is played with real style. Wild and the Quartet apparently have a flair for the work. Martinu's 1947 *Quartet* is a discursive, Dvorak-like opus. There are some extremely lovely passages and others sounding of the strident academism which Martinu occasionally finds necessary. In feeling, it is reminiscent of Roussel's *Quartet* though it lacks the extraordinary strength and integrity of that work by Martinu's friend and teacher. The performance again is excellent. The recording of both is adequate, though a bit on the thin side. —D.R.

A SAXOPHONE RECITAL: Sigurd Rascher (saxophone) and David Tudor (piano). Concert Hall Society LP CHS 1156, \$5.95.

▲NOBODY HAS to be convinced at this late date that the saxophone is a noble instrument. At least almost nobody; it would seem that composers are the lone exception. The saxophone repertory is in terrible shape. This recording underlines the dearth of material available to the serious performer. Almost everything is a transcription or an arrangement of an arrangement. But for sheer visceral experience the playing of Mr. Rascher makes the disc worthwhile. His range is incredible; his tone is in a class by itself. All saxophone people know about Rascher, of course, and they will hasten to acquire this stunning recital. Others, perforce, will regard it as a novelty. The program includes the Handel *Violin-Harpsichord Sonata in F*, two *Bourrées* of Purcell, Gershwin's *Prelude No.2*, and the Pugnani-Kreisler *Prelude* among lesser trifles. The recording captures Mr. Rascher's artistry with full fidelity.

—J.L.

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